

Public Meeting
September 21, 2010
Kyrouz Auditorium, City Hall
Round One Ideas - Brainstorming
I4-C2 – 65 Rogers Street
Under Idea Development

Meeting Minutes

Mayor Kirk: Introduction

Ms. Sarah Garcia, Community Development Director – Presented slides on the history of I4-C2 – legacy of urban renewal, undeveloped since 1960s. Spoke about connection of the land to Main Street and City Hall only 1 and 2 blocks from I4-C2. Referred the audience to the handouts for the process – Request for Schematic Design on October 15th with designs due December 15th – application for \$2500 grant funding in the handout. Also spoke about the Designated Port Area regulations and the primary use of such land being water dependent industrial, with an allowed 50% of the land to be supporting commercial use. The latter use being something that provides economic or operational support to the Designated Port Area and is also compatible with the working waterfront. Ms. Garcia introduced Mr. Peter Bent, Chairman of the Waterways Board, to speak about the wharf and piers on the parcel that are under the direction of the Waterways Board.

Mr. Peter Bent: spoke about the Harbor Commissioners Line – revised only several times this century. Hadn't been revised for 40 or 50 years. New line developed by dropping back the required amount of space from the Army Corps of Engineers line. The ACOE line didn't meander, and now the line can be accurately found. In the previous administration it was intentional that the new space we got from this line was not immediately utilized. It was always intended to use the greater amount of space for the future development of this [I4-C2] property. This approach has been continued under Mayor Kirk. She has seen "back of the napkin" ideas, but an actual plan will depend on the needs of the chosen development for the entire parcel.

Mr. Bent explains that 100-150' could be extended from the edge of the current watershed to the new harbor line. The map of this area is available at the Harbor Master's office. [and also at the Community Development Office.]

Public Comment Period

Mayor Carolyn Kirk – email from William Taylor. He talked about the need for parking in the City. Talked about grass parking lots that can be attractive additions to cities. He references a website: www.invisiblestructures.com.

Mr. Damon Cummings – Tonight is a very big night for me. I stood right here at this podium in 1984. I was the entire public for the hearing about a shopping mall on this site. I told them that I thought the shopping mall was not legal. They didn't believe me of course. It took 11 years for the decision that settled that matter. In particular I would like to thank Red Deering, Lena

Novello ... and others. I wish they were here tonight to see this returned to the people of Gloucester. Thank you Mayor Kirk.

In my point of view, it is much better already. It is cleaned up. We want to see it cleaned up, but there is no hurry. We were going to spend 4-5 million for a parking lot next to the police station with 40 spaces. We just got 200 spaces.

It's important that we do it right. I like all the proposals we've heard, even the Aquarium. The idea I like best so far is the center for collaborative research. I ask only two things:

Keep the view corridor open from City Hall to I4-C2 to the Paint Factory. Route from waterfront to city center. Please do not block it with buildings.

Second, please do something legal.

I intend to help with the collaborative research proposal.

Mr. David Lincoln. I represent the Citizens for Gloucester Harbor. We are pursuing the Center for Collaborative Research, based on the function that fishermen and scientists working together realize the possibilities for collaborative research. For example, if our fisherman wanted to know something about the seafloor at Georges Bank, they would come to our facility to find underwater vehicles. They would immediately deploy the equipment then test it against results they had in the lab. Many of our fishermen have seen the oil getting over and under the booms in the oil spill in the Gulf. Perhaps it's time to invent a better boom. That's what we think of as collaborative research. Model available to us – the Northeast Consortium did this. Bring fishermen together with scientists and use it as a magnet to bring in resources.

Mayor Kirk: Would this be an eligible DPA Use?

Ms. Garcia: Yes, it would definitely be considered a Supporting Commercial Use, but possibly meet criteria for water dependent industrial use if underwater robotics part of the operation.

Man from the audience: Researchers don't return taxes. To me, as someone who grew up in the City, I'm seeing the waterfront disappear. Maritime Heritage Center has become a museum. Tarr & Wonson Paint Factory is now not taxable. Our waterfront is being taken away for non-salary producing parcels.

Mr. Paul McGeary. I'm a Ward 1 City Councilor and a 35 year resident. I live near Head of the Harbor and used to be downwind of the dehyde plant. My proposal is to put an Aquarium and Research Center on I4-C2. A Research Center much as David has proposed. The aquarium can support tourism – important, shouldn't underplay that. But it also provides the base for the research institution that will provide 21st century jobs that will give our kids jobs here. Route 128 didn't grow from our balmy climate. The high tech corridor developed from the research institutions in Boston. We can serve as core for maritime economy if we have the brain institute here. It could also serve as conference center. Also serve as visitor center – get people out of their cars downtown Gloucester. It has to be bigger than Maritime Heritage Center, but obviously smaller than the New England Aquarium. What would help is a hotel. But as you've heard, hotel can't go there. But if you built a hotel across the street, you could have a bridge across Rogers Street that connects them to the conference center. It creates that corridor. Rogers

Street – the great wall of China. As a sort of gateway to the City, as a place of welcome, where serious research happens, it's something that should be seriously considered for I4-C2. I tucked the Aquarium over to one side to keep the view shed, but also to allow other uses to happen: farmers Market, fishermen's work areas. The Aquarium is a core.

Mr. Bob Alves. Councilor, I agree with everything you just said. But I also – the Mayor hit the nail on the head, that joy you get from going down to the waterfront – you will no longer be able to see the water from the land. Transient boaters. We have thousands of boats that bypass Gloucester every year. Our harbor is not friendly. We have only a very small dinghy dock now. I4-C2 is a perfect place for them. If transients stay over night, they need to have ice, water. They'll come downtown. They'll spend money.

Mayor Kirk: Is recreational boating allowable?

Ms. Garcia: Temporary docks [bottom anchored instead of permanently installed] for recreational boats, called 10A floats, are eligible for recreational boating in the DPA. These could be part of the I4-C2 development. This need has been identified in our community values. The supporting services would have to be in the context of other permitted uses on the site. A recreational marina has never been requested.

Man in audience: We have no place to tie up transient boating. And more...

Mr. Alves. Spoke again in support of the transient boating. Also in support of youth sailing program from the docks.

Mayor Kirk. This speaks to Schematic Designs looking at the water sheet as well as the land side.

Mayor Kirk – I have been contacted by a Whale Watch company that sees 25,000 passengers come through their facility. They would love to be at this parcel. Obviously they would require dockage. Also would need small ticket booth and parking, maybe some bathrooms. That's an idea floating out there that I want to share. Again, this speaks to the need to look at the water sheet as well as the land.

Ms. Bowen. Tonight I brought the large schematic commissioned some years ago by the City. Coincidentally the designer lives at 65 Farrington, and this is 65 Rogers. The design shows an underground garage. Schooner design fascinated him. What better way to celebrate him than to build a new schooner here and launch it from I4-C2. His design included boat repair in some of the buildings. He had shop spaces. I believe the city had him do this design (circa 1970). I'm asking city hall to please try to resurrect this plan that would include the schematic designs already in existence. The underground garage could be a wedding chapel. I've been watching weddings on the back shore for years. I also like the idea of research very much. But I wouldn't want it to be closed doors. An aquarium – I say let the wildlife go free. Go see them in the ocean with submersibles, glass-bottom boats.

Ms. Sunny Robinson. I'd like to say two different things. One, challenge the city to do something conceptually, and then how a specific idea works with that. In the Mount Auburn Report – I see that it is coming to a public meeting Oct 5th – that's really great – they talk about the 3 legs of the maritime economy. I challenge the city to find a proposal or a group of linked proposals that actually brings all three pieces of the legs of the economy together. In doing so, I fully support what the Mayor says about preserving the DPA and what is allowable in the DPA. I like Dave Lincoln's Collaborative Research proposal very much. I like it because it has the potential to bring all three pieces of economic development together. We've already talked about the fact that marine research is at least a supporting use. It seems it has the potential to be a directly water dependent industrial use. If the fishermen are using boats to conduct research, you expand the water dependent industrial use that is there. Many books talk about preserving the authenticity of what brings people to the area. So demonstrating how you bring fishermen and researchers together can be a visitor attraction. An idea mentioned a lot – how to have a water shuttle/water launch. It seems a very viable added piece to a collaborative research center. We don't have to put all the pressure for transient boating on our most precious central parcel. I agree very much with people who talk about preserving the view corridor. Design must fit into the land. Not block the view. View from city hall to harbor across to paint factory should remain. Research has the potential to lead to new industry: idea development to manufacturing. So far, that proposal interests me the most.

Ms. Suzanne Altenberger. Submits handout. I am proposing the audacity of actually making serious money at that site. Creating jobs. I am proposing a boatyard. Not for repair, only brand new vessels. Increased fuel costs means we need new boat design. 1930s to 1970s very lean vessels operated out of Gloucester. Lean hulls will be necessary for viable fishing and whale watch boat operations. I4C2 is the only property on inner harbor large enough to fit the lean hulls necessary for future vessels. Examine opportunities for structure with 3 bays for boats constructed to be launched by cranes. Mezzanine and information area would make this installation part of the working port tour and the harborwalk. Connections to Gloucester High School.

Mr. Paul Johnson, Bay View. When I moved to Gloucester 14 years ago, I was so excited to be here. But 14 yrs later, I'm having second thoughts. If at the time the train had run to Newburyport, I probably would have moved there. Most every weekend we go to Newburyport and walk the harbor walk. We like it. Sometimes we like Salem, b/c we have a ferry to Boston. We like Boston. We don't have a downtown park. We have Stacey Blvd. It's a no-man's land. No trees. No nice place to hang out. There's Stage Fort Park but too far. The only hangout downtown is Walgreens. There's no place downtown to really hangout. We don't have the strength of a Main Street of other communities. We can do something about a park. I think Dave's proposal's great, as long as it doesn't take up the view corridor, but we also need a park. Whatever we do, what do we want to say about this situation 20 yrs from now? Is it the kind of thing that brings pleasure to community? What would make people happier? Whatever we do, I would suggest we have a park there that serves a substantial amount of the community.

Mayor Kirk: What are the regulations regarding this use?

Ms. Garcia: Public access is eligible, and significant public space too. But the DPA has assets for industrial use. The regulators wouldn't want to permit only a park use.

Ms. Marcia Hart. Years ago I helped make these buttons: I foresee too. I am very happy that no one has called it an eyesore tonight. I thank you Mayor Kirk for doing what no one else could do – wresting this property from Geoff Cohen's hands. He's probably much happier too. But I4-C2 is not just a vacant parcel, it's a view. I like all the ideas people have talked about. I've said many times it's the existing parcel in the city that has the capacity of creating a city center. People arrive here by boat or car and don't find the center. I would utilize that property to connect all those things that we already have and make them visible to the residents – primarily – but also for the tourists as well. I have another item – a postcard – I4-C2 as a huge green swath in the middle of the city. I do understand city's need for revenue, and the requirements of the industrial harbor and I do want the city to remain industrial harbor. I don't believe parking should be on the waterfront. We have parking problem, but I don't think that's where it should be solved. That piece of property is the one parcel that connects places – half way between St. Peters Park and Cruiseport. We're rich here in wonderful things to see, but people don't know how to maneuver around to see them in an interesting way. I4-C2 is huge. You can have a Cooperative Research Center; you can also put a launch there. I wouldn't put dockage for transient boaters. But put showers there, bathrooms. Even a three story building as long as it's narrow enough so it doesn't block the view. The potential's been unleashed. If there were anything that had to take up the whole space, boat building would be ok.

Mayor Kirk: Tells "I Foresee Too" story and visit to previous owner of the property. Further, mentions the Building Center. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's property." The Building Center is a valued business owner and has no plans to move their business. The neighboring properties should be respected by the development of this parcel.

Mayor Kirk adds another idea brought to her. She was stopped by an electrician. He said there is a music park called Waterworks in Quincy with tents. Mayor Kirk invites Peter Van Ness, the creator of the recent Celebrate Gloucester concert on I4C2, to speak.

Mr. Peter Van Ness. He wants to comment on what Sunny Robinson said. You want to connect all the pieces. I have one problem with Mount Auburn report. They leave out the creative economy – the arts and music scene here in Gloucester. You could put all four on this property. You call it the view corridor. I'd like to call it the beauty. Beauty is at the heart of the creative economy. We have a gorgeous city - a little gritty, but beautiful. If you could do something more with the water area – I don't know anything about that. But Celebrate Gloucester only used a small portion of the property. You could put an entertainment center along with a visitor center and keep all fishing boats and add more. I want to encourage us to combine all that makes Gloucester authentic: the working waterfront, the artistic community, the most fabulous music scene – hub of independent music – north of Boston.

Ms. Ann Banks. I live in Lanes Cove. I've been here 50 years. I was involved in the St. Peters Park development. The first thing that got cut out of that development was the bathrooms. They cost about \$50,000, but the ongoing cost is the big thing. I tried to get Maritime Heritage Center to include showers and laundry. They said the YMCA and the laundry were within walking

distance. I don't think anyone mentioned putting the Harbormaster's office on I4C2. That's come up in discussions by Citizens for Gloucester Harbor.

Mr. Ronn Garry. Many of my comments relate to and are compatible with what's been said before. I've studied I4-C2 since coming to Gloucester 4 years ago. I sat in every listening post. I've had conversations with 100s, maybe 1000s of residents. I attended 100s, 1000s City Council, tourism, (...more) meetings. All to develop a solid understanding of this city. I stand before you with an economic dev plan for I4-C2. It is the focal point of my work. But the Birds Eye site is also important and Harbor Loop. They form the trinity. I left out the harbor, but I'll leave that out for now.

Let me set the table for economic standards for I4-C2.

1. Plan should be anchored with private sustainable businesses at its core. While I like collaborative research and aquariums. All depend on public grants. I believe in the private sector.
2. Should contain repeatable businesses that draw year round. By repeatable I mean those things that draw the customers back repeated times.
3. Should have repeatable businesses that draw economic strength from local community and from visitors as well.
4. Should have natural economic connections to Birds Eye, Harbor Loop, and Boston. Must complement, not compete.
5. Should be in harmony with relaxed DPA regulatory environment. The DPA regulations are punitive regulations.
6. Should complement businesses of abutting neighbors – Gloucester House Restaurant & the Building Center
7. Should take advantage of the topography - include underground parking. We have 147 storefronts on Main St. I4C2 should support this economy.

Traditional Values should be respected.

1. Should be gathering place.
2. Preserve view Corridor
3. Part of Harborwalk
4. Public Access Rogers to waterfront
5. Visitors Center, bathrooms and showers. Harbormasters Office.
6. Expand commercial and recreational dockage.
7. Should be sensitive to maritime way of life and fishing.
8. Keep historical character

I suggest a Fish Market and a Produce Market. Include Gloucester House.

Mr. Ralph Popolo. I recently purchased property on Main St. I've been involved in real estate in other parts of the region. I have family here - fishing family. Love this place. I travel overseas quite often. I look forward to a master plan for the downtown area. We have a blank canvas here. We need a plan for what this parcel could do and how it affects downtown area. No one has spoken about traffic, sidewalks. I love all the plans I've heard. But we must be aware of logistics. I look at Malden, Medford. They've deterred people from coming downtown. I am proposing that this parcel could be a catalyst for other businesses to spawn. There are a lot of other vacant parcels available. No reason to put a building up. We want to leave a legacy. No rhyme or reason for architecture now in the downtown. I hope this particular property does

maintain the character of Gloucester. I ask people to consider impacts beyond the site: traffic flow, aesthetics, what it would bring to the community.

Ms. Ann Rhineland, 16 Pine Street. I probably shouldn't be here – I'm a newcomer - but 35 years of marriage to someone from Gloucester and also coming from Lunenburg, which has not succeeded, leads me to speak. Carolyn Kirk has laid the foundation here which is great. Boatbuilding is a wonderful opportunity. I've been to Rockland, [...others.] Nowhere is there a center of future boatbuilding. Gloucester has an opportunity here, drawing on old and new.

Mr. Bob Whitmarsh. I like some of the things I've heard so far. I'd also like to see some retail in the space down there. Small shops, galleries. I'd like to see small wooden structures – something with some charm to it. I think you could incorporate that with some of the other ideas. And, thank you very much Mayor Kirk.

Mayor Kirk. While I appreciate the comments, a lot of other people made this happen: staff from the city, the City Council.

Mr. Doug Cook. I'm a property owner on Main Street. Live in Magnolia, on the Downtown Development Commission. I've been studying the dynamic of I4-C2 and downtown for quite some time. Ideas tonight are awesome. I think what's been talked about tonight is an achievable goal. This parcel could be a linchpin. Gloucester is an unbelievable resource – untapped potential. Scale makes people nervous that it's going to change Gloucester. I don't think you'll find it's going to change what we have now. I would call I4-C2 a gateway: a gateway for Gloucester to look into the sea, and for the sea to look into Gloucester. It's a threshold, and what's missing for the city and could tie it all together. Visual access to the harbor is key. Last night, I thought of Rowe's Wharf and by the Rose Kennedy Greenway, and how you look through that archway to the harbor. You can have a beautiful building – include all kinds of things. But the key is that this property can establish the criteria to pull the city together. That's my vision of how this needs to be orchestrated: that we channel this development so that everyone in this city gets some benefit from it.

Mr. Al Millfogle. 31 Cherry St. I've lived in Gloucester all my life. Everyone in my family is a fisherman except me. I never was bored in Gloucester. There was always something happening on the waterfront. I don't see that today. I am on the fiesta committee for 21 years. I've met thousands of visitors in this role. What they tell me, yes they can go to Faneuil Hall, Marblehead, but Gloucester has all the amenities they're looking for – you can go boating, go clamming, go lobstering, go to beaches..... What they'd like to do is come to Gloucester for a weekend and do these things. This other gentlemen said repeatable customers. In addition to whale watch boats and other excursions, give them something where they come back every year with their family. This is why people come back to Fiesta every year. I'd like to see people down there all the time. Provide them with something. They'll be back again and again.

Mayor Kirk: Ok. Ideas have been coming in. This has been very interesting tonight. We are still getting ideas verbally and by email. Pretty quickly we're moving into phase II. Seaport Council gave the City a large grant. We want to spend it wisely. We spent some on the Economic Development Study. With \$50,000 we're dividing it into \$2500 increments to help

citizens, nonprofits and others have the resources to get a drawing, an engineer to walk the property to get some size of building and be able to respond to the Request for Schematic Design. [Mayor lists requirements for submission - in handouts.] Two months to do it, a little bit of money, and everything due back by mid-December. We'll display all submissions through January. Not a popularity contest. The win will be, as discussed here, when it's all brought together into what works for the City. And then put into a formal Request for Proposals with a required non-refundable \$10,000 deposit. We don't want to leave I4-C2 untouched – an RV parking lot! We won't move in haste, but we will move this along the process: Request for Proposals (RFP) in the spring, a selection committee, a ranking of proposals. Finalists will make public presentations and get to a point where we would award the winner of the RFP. Assuming, of course, that the community is moving along with this, the city will work to make a proposal work for I4-C2. So it will be very interesting. I have to tell you, the bankers and the lawyers hate it when we do it this way. It's so much easier when you just cut a deal with the city. But this parcel is special. It is pivotal for the community.

Any questions?

Sunny Robinson. Did you mean nonrefundable \$10,000 deposit for the RFP?

Mayor Kirk: No, I meant refundable. It just means we want serious proposers with ability to finance the project.

Dave Lincoln. Does a group that develops have to pay the city for the acreage?

Mayor Kirk: At this stage, when people respond with “community benefit” section of the Schematic Proposal, they should identify financial benefits to the city as well as others.

Meeting concluded 9:10 p.m.